

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



**USA Swimming LSC Development Committee**

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1.0 USA Swimming - Welcome to USA Swimming! USA Swimming is made up of over 400, 000 athletes, officials, coaches and volunteers who are passionate about the sport of swimming and dedicated to providing our swimming athletes with outstanding growth experiences in our sport. We are excited that you want to join our team by volunteering your time and expertise to swimming. We hope that you are challenged and enriched through your USA Swimming volunteer experiences.

1.1 USA Swimming Core Objectives – As USA Swimming members, we work to serve the sport through our three core objectives:

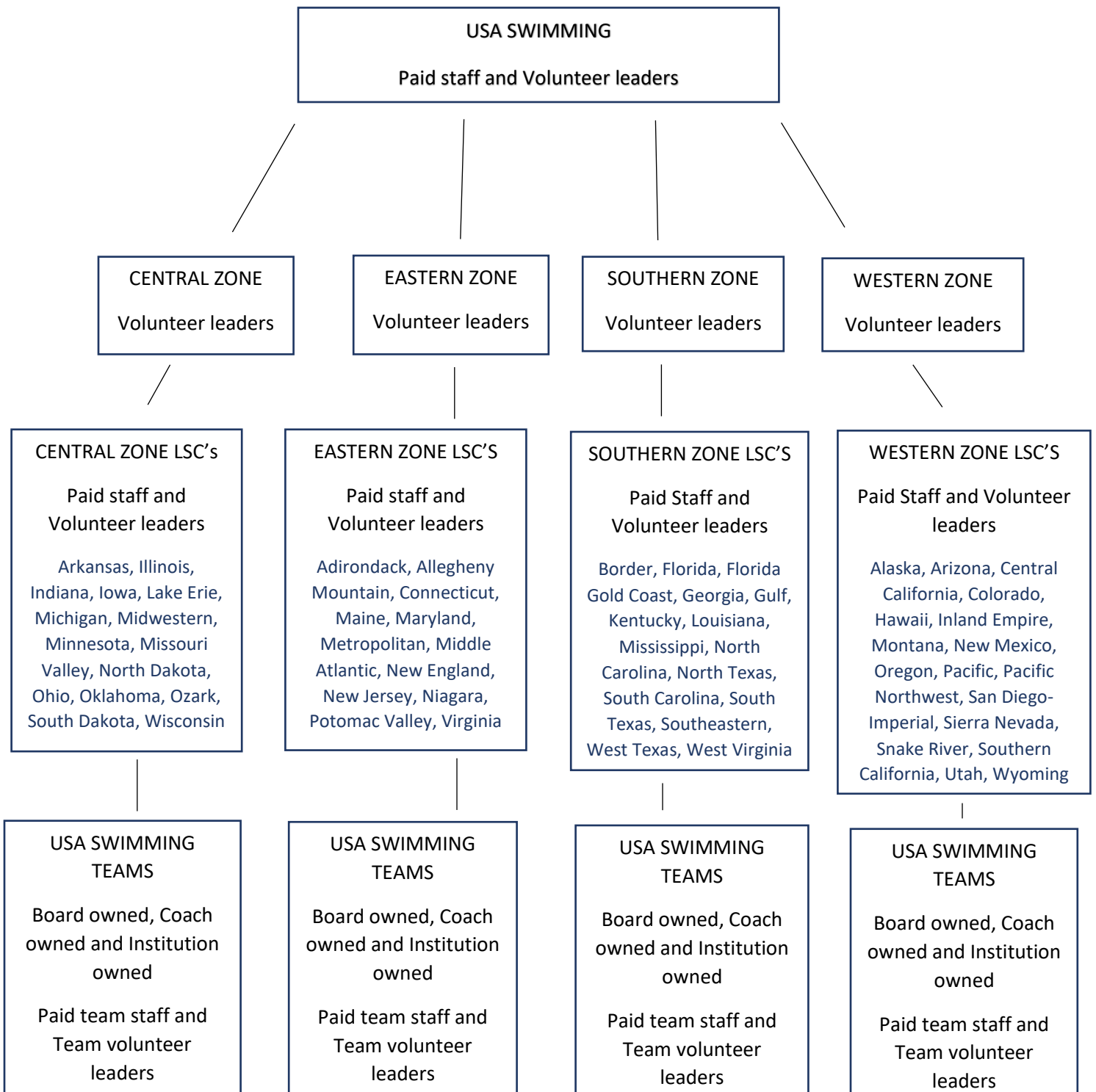
- Build the base
- Promote the sport
- Achieve competitive success

1.2 USA Swimming Cultural Values – As an organization, USA Swimming is founded upon strong cultural values:

- Embrace the responsibilities of leadership and strive for excellence in everything we do
- Conduct business with integrity, transparency, and a spirit of stewardship – act in the best interest of the sport and our members
- Be service-oriented with our members, business partners and each other
- Engage in disciplined planning, but be not afraid to act intuitively to confront challenges and seize opportunities
- Identify clear priorities and allocate our time and resources accordingly
- Hold ourselves and each other accountable to the highest standards of performance results and professionalism; treat others fairly and with respect
- Exhibit the entrepreneurial spirit, enthusiasm for growth, and a positive “can do” attitude
- Encourage environments in which our members are safe
- Promote the importance of diversity and inclusion
- Strive to learn and improve, always be open to questions, and maintain a willingness to change

1.3 USA Swimming Organizational Structure – From one end of our organization to the other and at all levels in between, the success of our USA Swimming athletes depends upon the organization of and coordination between paid professional staff and dedicated volunteers. From USA Swimming headquarters to our LSC board rooms to our local swim teams, the collaborative efforts of our staff and volunteer members is the foundation upon which our sport is built.

## USA SWIMMING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



*For additional details, please see the 2017 USA Swimming Handbook, USA Swimming's Table of Organization, pages 140-141*

**2.0** USA Swimming Volunteer Culture – USA Swimming thrives as one of the strongest governing bodies in all of sport thanks to the efforts of our volunteers. Every day, USA Swimming volunteers ensure that our sport is governed effectively, that our athletes perform according to our competitive standards and that our swimming events are operated fairly, safely and efficiently for all our athletes. Volunteers from all walks of life are vital in the operations of both the “wet” side and the “dry” side of the sport. **Volunteers are the engine that drives our sport and keeping them engaged, invested, happy and appreciated with the volunteer work they do sustains our volunteer culture.**

**2.1** USA Swimming Volunteer Organization – Our USA Swimming Volunteer Organization follows the organizational structure of USA Swimming as outlined in the diagram on page 4.

**2.1.1** Local – USA Swimming Teams: USA Swimming volunteer opportunities are available close to home! ~~Speak with your team’s coaching staff~~ **Engage in getting to know your local opportunities today by speaking with your club’s board members or your coaching staff to learn more about ways that you can volunteer to serve your team. Allow them to know your volunteer capabilities and level of commitment that may enhance the experience of all of the athletes in your swim team program!**

Examples of volunteer opportunities available at a team level include and are not limited to – hosting a team dinner, timing at a swim meet, operating the food concessions area at a home meet, assisting with team operational tasks and serving as a USA Swimming official at local meets.

**2.1.2** Local – Local Swim Committees (LSC’s): You are not only a member of your local swim team but you are also a member of your Local Swim Committee or LSC! Your LSC is a volunteer organization and can use your help. Examples of volunteer opportunities available at an LSC level include and are not limited to – officiating at LSC championship meets, assisting with meet operations at LSC championship meets, serving on an LSC Task Force or Committee, **helping with LSC special events ie awards banquets, and serving on the LSC Board of Directors.**

**2.1.3** Regional – Zones: Your LSC is part of a regionally organized Zone. There are four geographically oriented Zones within USA Swimming made up of between 12 and 17 different LSC’s. Examples of volunteer opportunities available at the Zone level include and are not limited to – **helping your LSC at Zone events,** officiating at Zone and Sectional championship meets, assisting with meet operations at Zone and Sectional championship meets, serving on the Zone Board of Review, serving on the Zone Board of Directors.

**2.1.4** National: As a member of USA Swimming, you have opportunities to volunteer at the National level in our sport. Examples of volunteer opportunities available at the National level include and are not limited

to – officiating at National, Junior National and Futures Championship meets, assisting with meet operations at National, Junior National and Futures Championship Meet, serving on the National Board of Review, serving as a member of the House of Delegates at the USA Swimming Convention, serving on a National Committee.

2.2 USA Swimming Volunteer Opportunities – There are several key areas of volunteer need within the USA Swimming community. Of course, with a diverse community of over 400,000 members, there are both broad areas of volunteer need and more specialized areas of volunteer need. As you become more engaged with USA Swimming through your team, your LSC, your Zone and USA Swimming headquarters, you are certain to find an excellent match between your volunteer skills and the needs of our swimming community.

2.2.1 Officiating – Do you enjoy observing the sport of swimming, assessing swimmer’s skills and strokes and understanding the rules that govern our swimming competitions? **Would you prefer being active versus sitting in the stands?** If so, officiating may be a great volunteer opportunity for you! Our USA Swimming officials are outstanding volunteer leaders in our sport. Through certification, education and connections within the swimming community, our officials help teach our developing athletes about the rules of swimming competition; help ensure a fair competitive field for every athlete and help run fun and engaging swim meets.

2.2.2 Event Staffing – Are you super organized, are you a computer-lover, are you happy to be in the heart of the action at a swim meet? You could offer your volunteer skills at your home swim meets as well as at swim meets in your LSC, Zone and at the National level. The best swim meets are run by a large, skilled, friendly and positive work staff. ~~Most swim meets run best with 50-100 staff members.~~ **All swim meets run best when supported by their volunteer base. It may take as few as 15 volunteers or as many as 75 – 100 to put on a great event.** You can help by timing, organizing the awards, learning the swim meet computer systems, running the food concessions area, seeking event sponsorships, overseeing the hospitality area for coaches and officials, **chopping vegetables or fruit at home**, collecting admissions, serving in media and promotions. If you want to make our USA Swimming meets safe, fun and fair for the athletes, we want you to work in event staffing **to create the best competitive atmosphere for our athletes and coaches!**

2.2.3 Leadership and Governance – Are you interested in the dry side of swimming? Did you know that every USA Swimming team is governed by the Rules and Regulations, Policies and Procedures of USA Swimming? Moreover, each USA Swimming team is a member of one of the fifty-nine Local Swim Committees (LSC). Each LSC is appropriated specific

governing duties and responsibilities through USA Swimming and has its own Rules and Regulations, Policies and Procedures for its member athletes, teams, volunteers and competitions. If you have strong leadership skills, if you have a background or interest in governance or if you wish to serve USA Swimming through task-specific work on committees and task forces, USA Swimming leadership and governance can be a place for you to offer your volunteer skills! Visit your LSC website and talk to members of your LSC leadership today to learn more about volunteer opportunities at the LSC level.

3.0 USA Swimming Volunteer Expectations – All USA Swimming volunteers are expected to uphold our USA Swimming standards for facilitating safe, professional and enriching experiences for our athletes, coaches and volunteers.

3.1 Safe Sport – USA Swimming Safe Sport standards ensure that all athletes are free from abuse within our sport. Our officials, coaches and other designated non-athlete members are required to maintain regular certification in Safe Sport standards and background checks.

3.2 Dress code – Many volunteer positions at swim meets and events will require a specific dress code for easy identification of volunteers in various areas of service. Most recognizable is the required dress code for our officials, which is often navy blue shorts, pants or skirts and white polo shirts.

3.3 Focus, attitude and effort – The most important requirements for volunteer service include focus on the tasks at hand, a great attitude about the work to be done in service of the athletes the best effort one can apply to the job, and enjoying giving your time to the sport of swimming! USA Swimming volunteers tend to be enthusiastic supporters of our sport, which makes for many positive volunteer experiences.

4.0 USA Swimming Volunteer Leadership Expectations – As our USA Swimming volunteers gain experience and expertise in the sport, many move into leadership roles in each of the key areas of service. USA Swimming is an organization that values strong leadership skills and seeks to demonstrate these skills to our athletes as they grow into leadership roles themselves at all levels. It is imperative that our USA Swimming volunteer leaders uphold our basic leadership expectations.

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities – Every leadership role as well as every volunteer role must have clear roles and responsibilities outlined in a handbook, Policies and Procedures, Rules and Regulations or By-Laws.

4.2 Communication – Volunteer leaders must have strong communication skills and be able to clearly outline the roles and responsibilities within their leadership area to the volunteers that they serve. Communication includes sharing relevant information with stake holders in a timely manner; reaching out to volunteers to request help and clarify tasks; listening to the needs and interests of the stake

holders and the volunteers and following up for feedback and to show appreciation after each volunteer task is completed.

4.3 Presence, Persistence and Consistency – There is no substitute for presence, persistence and consistency in leadership. Leaders who serve with a positive presence, who are persistent in pursuing the goals of the group and who consistently show up ready to work inspire the best in others. Your presence as a leader is critical to the success of the group!

4.4 Follow-Up and Feedback – It is critically important to follow-up with volunteers and stake holders to seek their feedback after a task is completed. Learning and growth happens in response to our experiences. Follow-up and feedback provide the irreplaceable knowledge for improvements and future successes.

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